

Jeremiah 38:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die.

Analysis

Let no man know of these words—After receiving God's explicit command and detailed warning, Zedekiah's first concern was secrecy, not obedience. The verb *yada* (יְדָה, "to know") emphasizes hiding the truth. This demand for concealment reveals Zedekiah's fundamental problem: he valued his officials' approval over God's will. A righteous king would have publicly proclaimed God's word; Zedekiah suppressed it.

And thou shalt not die—Zedekiah offered Jeremiah protection in exchange for silence, attempting to buy the prophet's complicity in covering up their meeting. The irony is profound: Zedekiah feared his officials enough to hide God's message, yet this very fear guaranteed both men would face worse than death—Jeremiah would witness Jerusalem's destruction, and Zedekiah would lose everything through the very disobedience he was now concealing.

Historical Context

Royal audiences in ancient Near Eastern courts were typically witnessed by officials and scribes. This secret meeting (likely in a private chamber, 38:14) bypassed normal protocol, showing Zedekiah's fear of his own court. His demand for secrecy proved he had already decided to reject Jeremiah's message before even asking for it.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does Zedekiah's priority of concealment over obedience reveal about his spiritual condition?
2. How do we similarly seek God's guidance while already planning to ignore it if inconvenient?
3. Why might Zedekiah think protecting Jeremiah matters if he plans to reject God's word through Jeremiah?

Interlinear Text

תְּמֻותָן בְּדָבְרִים לֹא פָּא לָהּ H428 H3808 and thou shalt not die H1697

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